

LDOE Weekly Newsletter



July 28, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new [resources and tools to support school reopening](#) last week. Their updated guidance affirms the work we're doing in Louisiana. The CDC recommendations largely align with our [Strong Start standards and best practices](#), as well as the reopening plans I'm seeing from systems and schools around the state. This speaks to the collaborative process used to develop our guidelines and the invaluable relationships we've developed with Louisiana's top medical experts.

The CDC recognizes the significant role schools play beyond student academic achievement. The updated guidance details the place schools hold in the day-to-day operations of a community and in supporting the whole child, stating schools' critical roles "make them a priority for opening and remaining open." Just as we have emphasized the importance of local decision making, the CDC encourages school officials to make decisions about school reopening based on available data and the levels of community transmission.

While the CDC guidance reports that children are at a lower risk for contracting COVID-19 than adults (adults make up 95 percent of cases), it also says schools should expect positive cases among students and staff. Positive cases can occur even if you do everything right. If COVID-19 is present in your community, it will be present in your school. What matters most is how you prepare now to respond to that situation. Like our guidelines, the CDC recommendations also state a positive case does not automatically result in school closure. School leaders should consult with local health officials and handle these on a case-by-case basis.

There are a number of other areas where the CDC reinforces our Strong Start guidance. Some of these include social distancing, face coverings, hand washing, static groups, sanitizing frequently touched surfaces and collaborating with local health officials. The CDC also emphasizes regularly communicating, educating and reinforcing your plans with stakeholders. It's not enough to have a plan. You must ensure your stakeholders (most importantly families and employees) understand what's happening and are updated on a consistent basis.

Our Strong Start guidance, like the recent CDC resources, are based on the best available knowledge of the situation as it stands today. As the health crisis changes, the same may be required of our reopening plans. Thank you for continuing to prepare for an unprecedented school year. No matter what things look like next month, we will all be ready to help our students move forward.

Dr. Cade Brumley
State Superintendent of Education

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Important Dates for School Systems

Office Hours	
Office Hours Title	Zoom Link
Strong Start 2020 Reopening Operations and Resources Office Hours	July 30 at 3 p.m.
Assessment and Accountability Office Hours	August 4 at 3:45 p.m.
Monthly Calls	
Monthly Call Title	Zoom Link
Data Coordinator Monthly Call	August 13 at 1 p.m.
Special Education Leader Monthly Call	August 13 at 2 p.m.
Assessment and Accountability Monthly Call	August 18 at 3:45 p.m.
EdTech Monthly Call	August 20 at 11 a.m.
Upcoming Events	
Event Title	Zoom Link
Virtual Town Hall Series for Schools (Tips for Teachers, Nurses and Coaches)	August 4 at 1 p.m.
Reopening Roundtable: A Virtual Series for Superintendents	August 7 at 9 a.m.
Virtual Town Hall Series for Schools (Tips for School Support Staff)	August 18 at 1 p.m.
Important Deadlines	
Document Link	Deadline
Strong Start 2020 Implementation Survey	July 28
FY 2019-2020 Career Development Fund (CDF) End of Year Report	July 31
October Content Leader and Mentor Teacher Training Provider Application	July 31
2020-2021 Teacher Leader Advisor Application	August 14

School System Support

Reopening Roundtable: A Virtual Series for Superintendents

Superintendents and charter leaders are invited to participate in a Reopening Roundtable virtual series hosted by Dr. Brumley. This call will be held at 9 a.m. each Friday during the month of August beginning **Friday, August 7**. Every week a panel of superintendents and school leaders will share their experiences reopening and operating schools during the health crisis. Along with the panel discussion, each session will include a Q&A session. It's important that the Department is a support agency during these uncertain times, and this series will help facilitate discussions of best practices. Information needed to join this series is included below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Friday at 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/97826043901>
- **Webinar Password:** 5v7Dwq
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID#:** 978 2604 3901
- **Dial-in Password:** 556910

Please enter your full name and school system name when logging in.

U.S. Senate Youth Scholarship Program

Due to the many uncertainties posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Senate Youth Program (USSYP)—Washington Week 2021—is currently on hold. Applications nationwide are not being accepted at this time. The Department will post USSYP updates in upcoming newsletters and [on the website](#) when available.

Please contact marian.johnson@la.gov with questions.

AT&T Teacher Appreciation Discount

AT&T has [expanded its appreciation offer](#) to now include teachers and their families. Both new and existing AT&T customers that are kindergarten through post-secondary teachers, professors, instructors and their families can [take advantage of this appreciation offer](#), which provides up to 25 percent savings on AT&T's best wireless plans. Interested teachers are encouraged to [complete AT&T's self-assessment](#) to determine eligibility.

Please contact: edtech@la.gov with questions.

Academics

Release of Class of 2019 Results

Tomorrow, **July 29**, the Department will announce performance data for the Class (Graduation Cohort) of 2019.

School leaders were notified of this release Monday via email. Individual school system and school-level cohort graduation and career credential files were shared via the FTP Monday. The files will be posted to the Department's [Data Center](#) tomorrow as part of the release

Please contact assessment@la.gov with questions.

Strong Start 2020 Instructional Material and PD Vendor Guide Updates
Please share with Chief Academic Officers, curriculum coordinators, professional development coordinators and purchasing directors.

The Strong Start 2020 plan includes [Instructional Materials Guidance](#) and [Professional Development Guidance](#), and the Department continues to work with publishers and vendors to update each guide as they build and refine their supports.

New or updated information will be highlighted in yellow within the document.

This week, the following entries have been significantly **updated**:

Instructional Materials Guidance	Professional Development Guidance
Curriculum Associates, Ready Louisiana Math, K–8	

Please contact classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov with questions.

World Languages Strong Start Guidance

Please share with World Language Supervisors and teachers.

The Department recently published the [Louisiana World Languages Resources Guidance](#) and the [World Languages Blended and Asynchronous Learning Guidance](#) to help teachers and school systems prepare for the upcoming school year. This guidance contains information on World Languages best practices and tools for teachers as well as alternative scheduling suggestions for schools with immersion.

For school systems that host International Associate Teachers (IATs), the Department published [Strong Start 2020 for International Associate Teachers](#). This guidance includes tips for welcoming and onboarding new IATs as well as the new [International Associate Teacher Exchange Planning Document](#).

Please contact languageacquisition@la.gov with questions.

Assessment and Accountability

For District Testing Coordinators and Accountability Contacts

High School Assessment Student Reports in DRC INSIGHT

- Student reports for the LEAP 2025 high school assessments administered in July will be available in DRC INSIGHT no later than July 31.

Pre-K–3 Assessment Guidance

- The Department recently released a [suite of guidance documents](#) to help school systems (and early learning centers) plan assessment administration for the 2020-2021 school year.
 - [2020-2021 Pre-K to Third Grade Assessment Guidance](#) has been released. The two approved Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) options are DRDP-K and *TeachingStrategies GOLD®* KEA. The four approved K–3 Literacy Screener options are Acadience Reading (formerly DIBELS Next), DIBELS 8th Edition, STEEP and STEP.
 - [Early Childhood \(pre-K\) Assessment Guidance for Various Learning Environments](#) outlines requirements and resources for assessing publicly-funded children (ages 3–5) using *TeachingStrategies GOLD®* in various learning environments including traditional, virtual and hybrid.
 - [K–3 Assessment Guidance for Various Learning Environments](#) outlines requirements and resources for administering the KEA and K–3 Literacy Screener in various learning environments including traditional virtual and hybrid.
 - [2020-2021 TeachingStrategies GOLD® Guidance](#) has been released for Early Childhood, OSEP and KEA.

ACT

- All school systems that tested students in June 2020 and/or who plan to test students during the October 2020 makeup for 2019-2020 juniors must sign the ACT MOU Addendum that is posted in the [Assessment Library](#).
- ACT State Administration
 - October 6 and October 20 paper-based administration only for students who were juniors in 2019-2020 and were unable to test in March or June. The Department will cover the cost for one administration per student.
 - Currently, ACT does not offer remote administrations for any scheduled testing dates.
 - The [Schedule of Events](#) for the October ACT administration is posted on the [ACT State Testing](#) site.
 - The [Schedule of Events](#) for the 2020-2021 WorkKeys administration is posted on the [ACT State Testing](#) site.
 - On August 3, [PearsonAccess^{next}](#) (PANext) opens to manage participation and verify secure district shipping addresses for both the ACT October administration and the 2020-2021 WorkKeys assessments.

Assessment Administration Support and Training Office Hours

The next Assessment and Accountability Office Hours will be on **August 4 at 3:45 p.m.** A password will now be required for Office Hours. Webinar details are listed below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** August 4 at 3:45 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/202189164>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 646-876-9923
- **Meeting ID#:** 202 189 164
- **Password:** 2020202!

High School Pathways

NCCER Module Assessments and Performance Profile Evaluations

Please share with school system secondary supervisors and career and technical education supervisors/coordinators, school leadership and professional school counselors.

NCCER [remote proctoring](#) will continue to be available through December 31 should circumstances prevent classes from meeting in person at accredited training and education facilities. If using the online testing system for written assessments, craft instructors are reminded to continue to submit performance profiles through the registry by creating a registration of training modules using actual dates for the performance profile evaluations. To access the [online testing system](#), contact the sponsor representative, martha.moore@la.gov.

Please contact martha.moore@la.gov with questions.

Jump Start Career Development Fund 2019-2020 End of Year Report

Please share with CTE supervisors/coordinators and school system leaders.

School systems, charter schools and special schools should complete the [FY 2019-2020 Career Development Fund \(CDF\) End of Year Report](#) and submit it to jumpstart@la.gov by this **Friday, July 31**. School systems can reference the total [FY2019-2020 Final Career Development Allocation](#) in order to complete the report.

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

Pupil Progression Plans Deadline: September 11

Please share with school system supervisors, administrators and counselors.

The 2020-2021 Pupil Progression Plan (PPP) template is available in the [School Policy Library](#).

The purpose of this document is to ensure school systems are in accordance with applicable laws and regulations related to student placement and promotion and aligned with policy in [Bulletin 1566](#). New to the template are sections related to BESE approved credit recovery policy and non-traditional coursework accepted by the NCAA.

The approved PPP should be submitted to PPP@la.gov by **September 11**.

Please contact PPP@la.gov with questions and extension requests.

Finance

70 Percent Instructional Requirement

Please share with business managers and all other finance officials.

Per the MFP Resolution, school systems or schools must ensure that 70 percent of the local school system general fund expenditures are in the areas of instruction and school administration at the school building level. Compliance with this expenditure requirement is calculated annually. An overview of the [70 percent expenditure evaluation process](#) is provided for reference.

The FY2018-2019 instructional requirement calculation is complete and a report of the results for all school systems and schools will be received by BESE at the August meeting.

In advance of the release of this information, the items listed below will be available for review by July 31 in the EdFin FTP site for each school system or school.

- 70 Percent Calculation Summary - 2018-2019 is a one-page summary of the 70 percent instructional requirement calculation.
- Funds Proration provides a line-by-line item account of how each expenditure is allocated and the basis for that allocation.
- Salary Distribution provides proration percentages by functional area based on PEP general fund salaries used to allocate AFR salaries, benefits and certain other expenditures.
- Staff-Student Distribution provides proration percentages by functional area based on PEP staff full-time equivalents (FTE) and separate percentages comprised of staff FTE and SIS student counts. These percentages are applied as indicated in the funds proration document.

Please contact LDOEMFPhelpdesk@la.gov with any questions.

Safe and Healthy Schools

School-based Medicaid Program

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) – Medicaid has released a [general update memo](#) and [covered services update](#) related to the School-based Medicaid Program (SBMP) for the upcoming school year. These updates include information concerning Medicaid program expansion subsequent to the recently approved Education State Plan Amendment (SPA). LDH and the Department are working to streamline SBMP processes and update guidance documents to assist local school systems in the Medicaid reimbursement process.

Please contact michael.comeaux@la.gov with questions.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grants

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded Louisiana \$597,050, provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-94), to be distributed to School Food Authorities (SFA) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to purchase equipment to serve healthier meals, improve food safety and expand access to school meals in the NSLP and School Breakfast Program. Priority will be given to schools where the greatest percentage of enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Reference the [2020 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants](#) document for additional grant-related information. Online applications will be accessible at the [Child Nutrition Programs website](#) on October 1. A School Food Service (SFS) Memo will be forthcoming to inform SFAs of dates for the open application period.

Please contact helen.folks@la.gov with questions.

Reminders

- [**School System Support Reminders**](#)
- [**High School Pathways Reminders**](#)
- [**Special Education Reminders**](#)
- [**Finance Reminders**](#)

School System Support Reminders

Implementing Strong Start 2020: A Toolkit for Teaching and Learning for Schools

Since implementation of most of the [Strong Start priorities](#) happens at the school level, the [Implementing Strong Start 2020: A Toolkit for Teaching and Learning for Schools](#) is now available and will support school leaders and teachers. It is structured around teaching and learning priorities and includes:

- **School Actions:** The high-level actions that principals and teachers take to implement the priority
- **Resources:** One document that includes samples, models and plans for implementing each priority

The [presentation](#) and [recording](#) of the webinar are posted in the [Strong Start Library](#).

Please contact em.cooper@la.gov with questions.

Strong Start 2020 Reopening Operations and Resources Office Hours

Please share with school system supervisors, administrators and counselors.

Strong Start School Reopening Office Hours will occur each Thursday at 3 p.m. and will run through September 3. The same zoom link will be utilized each week. Details are included below.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Thursdays at 3 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/91419461028>
- **Webinar Phone Number** 301-715-8592
- **Meeting ID#:** 914 1946 1028
- **Meeting Password:** 408891

Please contact LDOECOVID19support@la.gov.

High School Pathways Reminders

Jump Start Fact Sheet Update

Please share with CTE supervisors/coordinators, school system leaders and professional school counselors.

The Department released the first set of newly redesigned [Industry-Based Certification Fact Sheets](#). The redesigned fact sheets appear in the file box labeled **updated fact sheets**.

The fact sheets have been improved or have the following additions:

- Industry-based certification (IBC) STS code and an example of each IBC
- Certification resources to prepare for the exam
- System requirements for computer-based testing
- Direct links to accommodations and language access information (when available)
- Information on costs (when available)

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with questions.

Special Education Reminders

SER Calendar Update

The Department has updated the business day calendar in the special education reporting (SER) system. All school systems should run the updated calendar as soon as possible to access the most current evaluation due dates.

Please contact specialeducation@la.gov with questions.

Finance Reminders

FY 2020-2021 Initial MFP - Career Development Fund (CDF) Payments

Initial MFP - CDF payments for FY 2020-2021 were released by the Department on July 27. Funds should appear in school systems' and schools' bank accounts within one to three business days depending on the banking institution with which a school system or school conducts business. Additional details regarding these payments are available for reference in the [MFP Library](#).

Please contact doemfphelpdesk@la.gov with questions.

FY 2019-2020 Fiscal Risk Assessment

Please share with business managers.

By law, each city, parish or other local public school board shall be notified on a regular basis of its financial status per the annual Fiscal Risk Assessment. The FY2019-2020 Fiscal Risk Assessment has been updated and populated for each school system or school to include the latest available data.

Preliminary data is now available on each school and school system's "edfin" FTP site. Responses received by July 29 will be used to update each school and school system's data (if necessary) prior to submitting the report to BESE. Please submit responses to schoolfinancehelpdesk@la.gov.

Additional information about the Fiscal Risk Assessment process is provided below.

- [FY2019-20 Fiscal Risk Assessment Memo](#)
- [Description of Factors](#)
- [School System or School Response Form](#)
- [Purpose of Fiscal Risk Assessment](#)

Please contact schoolfinancehelpdesk@la.gov with questions.